



# ELECTION FOCUS 2008



May 23, 2008

No. 7

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**America.gov**  
Telling America's Story

## Latest News



Democrat Barack Obama, speaking in Iowa May 20, says the Democratic nomination is "within reach." (© AP Images)

### **Barack Obama Says Democratic Nomination "Within Reach"**

(05/22/2008)

**Each candidate wins a Democratic primary by a large margin**

Illinois Senator Barack Obama earned a majority of pledged delegates May 20, but this still leaves him about 370 delegates shy of securing the Democratic nomination. As polls in recent days indicated, Obama won Oregon's Democratic primary May 20. With 88 percent of the vote counted in the only U.S. state that conducts all voting by mail, Obama was leading by 16 percentage points. Oregon is a northwest state on the Pacific coast with one of the most liberal populations in the country. On the same day, Hillary Clinton defeated Obama



Speaking in Kentucky May 20, Clinton says she will continue to fight for the Democratic nomination. (© AP Images)

by 35 percentage points in Kentucky, a southern state with a large, white, working-class population. Its demographics are similar to those of neighboring West Virginia, where Clinton won by 41 percent May 13.

### **University of Nebraska Student Sets Sights on Congress** (05/16/2008)

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), students are excited about the upcoming U.S. elections. "I have never seen students more up on what the candidates stand for and what has been happening in particular races," said Michael Wagner, assistant professor of political science at the university. As at many college campuses throughout the country, students are enthusiastic about Democrat Barack Obama. But UNL is a "little different than your average campus," Wagner said. This campus, in the midst of America's rural heartland, is more conservative than the average U.S. university and Republican John McCain has many supporters here.

Daily updated information is available at a special **U.S. Elections page** on **America.gov**:  
<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/>

**Campaign Trail Talk** is your best source of information on the 2008 U.S. elections.  
More at: [http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/online\\_discussions/elections.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/online_discussions/elections.html)

# POLLS

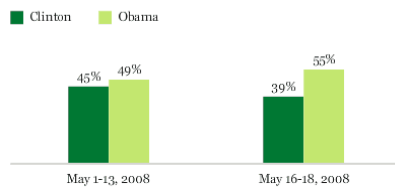
## Typical Marriage Gap Evident in Early 2008 Vote - Gallup Poll, May 23, 2008.

The Democratic candidates lead Republican John McCain among unmarried voters, while McCain bests both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton among married voters.

## New Poll Finds Big Shift Toward Obama. Californians give Obama a significant edge over Clinton and McCain (U.S. News & World Report, May 22, 2008)

A new poll released today in California finds political momentum shifting dramatically toward Barack Obama—and away from both Hillary Clinton and John McCain—in the nation's most populous state. According to a survey conducted over the past 10 days by the Public Policy Institute of California, 59 percent of likely voters here now have a "favorable" impression of Democrat Obama, while a majority view both of the other candidates unfavorably. In a state whose Democratic primary Clinton won in February, 51 percent of voters now say they have an unfavorable opinion of her; 53 percent of voters feel the same way about Republican McCain.

2008 Democratic Presidential Nomination Preferences  
Based on Democratic voters and voters who lean Democratic



Gallup Poll Daily tracking

GALLUP POLL

## Key Clinton Constituencies Moving Toward Obama - Gallup Poll, May 20, 2008.

Obama now competitive among women, whites, and the less educated. Gallup Poll Daily tracking has documented a surge in Democratic voters' support for Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton in recent days, swelling from a four percentage-point lead for Obama during the first part of May to a record 16-point lead for him in polling from May 16-18.

## CA Poll: Obama Outperforms Clinton – Real Clear Politics, May 22, 2008

In a new poll by the Public Policy Institute of California (May 12-18, 1,086 LV, MoE +/- 3%), Obama's support in California appears to be growing, as Clinton's seems to be shrinking. Clinton won the February 5 Democratic primary by 8 points, but now more than 50% hold an unfavorable opinion of her, as they do of McCain as well. However, 59% said they had a favorable opinion of Obama.

## Cable's Constant Campaign Coverage Out of Sync With Public News Interest –

Pew Research Center, May 22, 2008

The American public expressed strong news interest in the earthquake in China last week even as the news media remained heavily focused on the presidential campaign. In spite of modest coverage of both the earthquake in China and the cyclone that hit Burma, the public had a fairly good sense of the magnitude of both disasters.

### On the Campaign Trail Last Week

	A lot	A little	Nothing at all	DK
How much have you heard about...	%	%	%	%
Edwards endorsement of Obama	33	46	21	*=100
Bush's speech in Israel	29	36	34	1=100
McCain's speech forecasting his first term	17	45	37	1=100

## Edwards Rewrites the Election Story Line - Pew Research Center, May 20, 2008

Almost 40% of coverage reinforced the idea that the Democratic race was over.

A man who had trouble getting the media to pay attention to his presidential bid finally generated a lot of headlines last week. When he showed up to endorse Barack Obama at a Michigan rally on May 14, John Edwards not only made news, he helped change the story line. The splash was substantial. After backing his former rival for the Democratic nomination, by week's end Edwards was a dominant or significant figure in 10% of the campaign coverage, according to PEJ's Campaign Coverage Index for May 12-18. That is more coverage than the former senator managed to attract in three of the four weeks in January when he was still a candidate -- and more than he got the week he dropped out. And in embracing Obama less than 24 hours after Clinton's big win in West Virginia, Edwards diverted media attention away from a discussion of renewed Clinton momentum and helped refocused the narrative on Obama's apparent inevitability.

# CAMPAIGN 2008

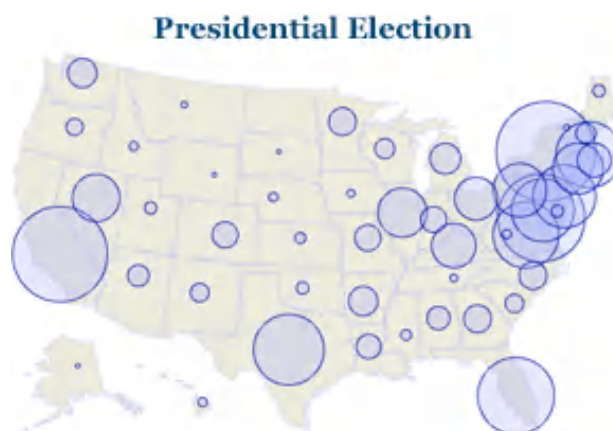


## Federal Election Commission

### Presidential Campaign Finance Map

Campaign finance information is now available via easy to use maps.

The Presidential Campaign Finance Map is updated within one day of the FECs receipt of the monthly electronically filed Presidential campaign financial disclosure reports.



### Candidates' Fundraising Disputes May Be Heard

By Matthew Mosk, Washington Post, Friday, May 23, 2008

*There may soon be a referee to hear disputes about election rules in the 2008 race for president.*

The Senate Committee on Rules and Administration yesterday approved the nominations of three new members to the **Federal Election Commission**. The three nominees whose names will now go to the full Senate for approval are: Cynthia L. Bauerly of Minnesota for appointment to a term expiring April 30, 2011, for the seat held by Robert D. Lenhard; Caroline C. Hunter of Florida for appointment to a term expiring April 30, 2013, for the seat held by Michael E. Toner; and Donald F. McGahn of the District for appointment to a term expiring April 30, 2009, for the seat held by David M. Mason.

### Political donations: 3 things to know

Fortune, May 22, 2008

Giving to Clinton, McCain or Obama? Here's how to get the most out of supporting your favorite candidate.

### Presidential Candidates Find 51st State Overseas

Unprecedented Courtship of U.S. Expats Pays Off

Washington Post, April 20, 2008; Page A12

Sen. John McCain charmed donors over fish pâté in London. Sen. Hillary Clinton sent her husband to Dublin and London to hug for dollars. Sen. Barack Obama rallied supporters in Beijing by teleconference and sent his wife to London to pan for campaign gold.



## Election Calendar

[2008 Presidential Primary Dates and Candidate Filing Deadlines for Ballot Access](#) (pdf)

[2008 Republican Primary Schedule](#)

[2008 Democratic Primary Schedule](#)

**Next Democratic Primaries:** June 1 - [Puerto Rico](#) June 3 - [Montana](#) [S.Dakota](#)

## ARTICLE ALERT

**CAN OBAMA TAKE A PUNCH?** Kirk Victor. *National Journal*, April 26, 2008, pp. 30-32. After the thumping that Barack Obama took in Pennsylvania -- a 9 point loss to Hillary Rodham Clinton -- more questions are being raised about his ability to effectively deal with the fierce lines of attack that he would face in a general election campaign against John McCain. [FULL TEXT](#)

**MCCAIN'S TURNING POINT.** Linda Douglass. *National Journal*, April 26, 2008, pp. 24-29. John McCain's three years as Navy's lobbyist in the Senate opened up a new world -- and new connections -- for the war hero. The former POW quickly befriended senators from both parties and absorbed lessons about national security, foreign policy, and political courage. [FULL TEXT](#)

**THE FIRST 21ST-CENTURY CAMPAIGN.** Brownstein, Ronald. *National Journal*, 16, April 19, 2008  
Brownstein examines the many reasons why he believes that the Democratic battle for the presidential nomination will be remembered as "the first true 21st-century campaign." He believes that the pairing of intense anti-Bush emotions on the part of Democrats combined with major advances in information technology are responsible for creating this new style of campaigning. Brownstein says "this transformation may be changing the model of what it takes to succeed in presidential politics." No longer is television the most important medium, rather it is the ability to leverage the Internet to inspire supporters to fundraise and organize on a candidate's behalf. [FULL TEXT](#)

### Political news and commentary:

[Clinton-Obama battle makes its way to Fla.](#) (USA Today -- May 23, 2008)

[Going Democratic: A VP option for McCain](#) (National Review - May 23, 2008)

[Arianna Huffington: Stop Yelling at Hillary to Stand Down; Start Yelling at the Superdelegates to Stand Up](#) (The Huffington Post - May 23, 2008 )

[A worthy Obama-McCain clash](#) (The Christian Science Monitor, May 23, 2008)

[And Paul Begala for Vice President?](#) (The New York Times - May 23, 2008)

[Hillary's sissy sexism claim](#) (The Wall Street Journal - May 23, 2008)

[McCain Rejects Support Of Controversial Pastor](#) (Washington Post, May 23, 2008)

[Will the Democratic Race End on May 21?](#) (Michael Barone, U.S. News & World Report, May 16, 2008)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Webchats with U.S. Experts: [U.S. Elections](#)

Join America.gov's elections experts **Michelle Austein** and **George Burkes** on the first Tuesday of every month to discuss the people, processes and issues that shape the U.S. presidential race. They will answer your questions and talk about the latest events on the 2008 campaign trail.



Date & Time: **June 3, 2008**, 09:00 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT)

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